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Honoring the Fallen, Supporting the Living



// **WRITE TO US!** If you have further questions, contact Patrick Yoes at (504) 234-4300, or pyoes@nationalfop.org.

Every May 15, during National Police Week, our profession gathers on the west front lawn of the U.S. Capitol for one of the most solemn and sacred traditions in American law enforcement: the National Peace Officers' Memorial Service hosted by the Fraternal Order of Police.

It is a time of remembrance, a time of reflection and a time to honor the brave men and women who gave their last full measure in service to others.

Standing before the audience at the 45th annual Memorial Service this year, one image once again carried tremendous weight and meaning: the thousands of white chairs placed directly before the stage. While red and blue chairs surround the grounds with law enforcement officers, supporters and dignitaries, the white chairs represent something far deeper.

Each white chair represents a fallen hero and the family left behind.

Every one of those chairs tells a story — a story of service, sacrifice, courage and love. Behind every name etched on the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial is a family forever changed by loss. A spouse carrying on without their partner. Children growing up without a mother or father. Parents enduring a pain no parent should ever know.

Those white chairs are not simply ceremonial symbols. They are visible reminders of the true cost of public safety.

As I addressed the thousands gathered on the Capitol grounds, I spoke about the reality facing our profession today. Law enforcement officers across this nation continue to

confront increasing dangers simply because of what they represent. For years now, hundreds of officers annually have been shot while serving their communities. Last year alone, 347 officers were shot in the line of duty, many in deliberate ambush-style attacks targeting them solely because they wore the badge.

That is not random. That is a pattern. And that pattern represents a growing epidemic of violence directed at America's law enforcement officers.

Yet despite these dangers, the men and women of law enforcement continue to answer the call.

They continue to stand between order and chaos. They continue to run toward danger while others run away. They make decisions in seconds that will be judged for a lifetime.

And even after the hardest days imaginable, they rise the next morning, pin on the badge and go back to work protecting communities they love.

That commitment speaks to something unique within this profession. Law enforcement is not simply a job; it is a calling rooted in duty, sacrifice and service to others. Those we honor during Police Week understood that responsibility. They wore the badge not for recognition or praise, but because they believed in something greater than themselves.

As we honored our fallen this year, we were reminded once again that remembrance alone is not enough. We have a responsibility to ensure that the sacrifices made by these heroes are never forgotten and the families they leave behind are never alone.

To the surviving families who joined us in Washington, D.C., I offered a simple but heartfelt

message: your loved one is not forgotten. Their legacy lives on in every officer who continues to serve, in every shift worked, in every call answered and in every life protected.

The sacrifice did not end with their final watch. Families continue to carry that burden every day through empty seats at dinner tables, missed milestones, quiet holidays and moments of grief that few outside this profession can truly understand. The Fraternal Order of Police will continue to stand beside those families, not just during Police Week, but throughout the year.

In difficult times, memorial services like this remind us why this profession matters.

It matters because communities depend on those willing to stand the line.

It matters because lives depend on men and women willing to place themselves in harm's way for complete strangers.

And it matters because freedom itself depends upon law and order.

As members of the Fraternal Order of Police, we must continue living lives worthy of the sacrifices made by those who came before us. We must lead with courage, serve with integrity and never take one another for granted.

Most importantly, we must ensure that the memory of our fallen officers continues to guide us forward, serving as both an inspiration and a solemn reminder of who we are and why we serve.

May we never forget their sacrifice.

May we always honor their families.

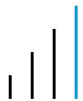
And may God continue to watch over the men and women who stand that line every single day. **FOP**



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Police Week, Membership Updates and More



// **WRITE TO US!** If you have further questions, contact Jimmy Holderfield at (904) 813-0067, or jholderfield@nationalfop.org.

Greetings, my brothers and sisters. I hope this June edition of the *Journal* finds you safe and well.

The annual National Peace Officers' Memorial Service in Washington, D.C., was the best-organized in my years of attending. Memorial Service Committee Chair Matt Hagan, National Auxiliary President Glenda Lehmann and their army of volunteers worked tirelessly to set everything up and comforted the survivors in attendance. U.S. Vice President JD Vance gave an inspirational keynote address and reaffirmed the administration's support for law enforcement in our country. A special thanks goes to the numerous National trustees who assisted in the presentations of medals to the survivors.

President Trump could not attend, since he was attending to national business in China, but he did host a



White chairs set up for the Memorial Service



White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller and Secretary Jimmy Holderfield

dinner for FOP leadership in the Rose Garden. It was a high honor to join the president, along with his senior level cabinet and staff. I had the pleasure of dining with White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller. We discussed issues facing our members. President Yoes was invited to sit with President Trump, and numerous accolades were given to the FOP for our support of the president and the tough job we all do.

As I have previously reported, we are moving at full speed with the conversion to the new membership database system, Ortu3. The changeover will take place over the next 90 to 120 days. This is being done for several reasons, including that we don't want to overload the new system by having over 2,200 local lodges come on at the same time. Rolling out in phases allows us to correct any issues in the system and adjust our training

modules. Right now, the state of North Dakota is fully on board, and the state of Colorado is converting. We are working on a schedule so that state and local lodges can anticipate when they will come on board.

During this conversion, lodges will continue to use the Association Anywhere database until they are converted. Information entered in AA will migrate over to Ortu3 automatically, so no duplicate entries are necessary. Once a state and its local lodges are cleared with Ortu3, they will be cut off from using AA. For the National FOP IT staff to begin the transfer process for a state, all pending requests, such as new members, must be cleared from the system. We are excited about Ortu3, and I am sure you will be too.

Continued on page 12 >

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— Ryan Wright, Wellness Coordinator, Santa Clara PD

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SCAN TO
SCHEDULE A
MEETING

SECRETARY'S MESSAGE

Continued from page 10 >

On May 13, the U.S. House of Representatives took up House Concurrent Resolution 96. The resolution didn't have any spending attached. It didn't call for using any governmental resources. It didn't make any changes to operations. It simply was a bill recognizing the hard work and dedication of law enforcement officers throughout our country. What a fitting tribute during Police Week. The bill passed with 243 representatives voting for it and 173 voting against. Regardless of political affiliation, all representatives should have voted in the affirmative to show support for our nation's law enforcement.

This past week, we faced a major sewage issue at the National Office. What we originally thought was a relatively minor broken pipe in the holding tank turned into a major undertaking. Once we identified and fixed the broken pipe, we discovered that there was either a break or an obstruction in the

discharge pipe leading to the city's main sewage line. The problem was that traditional excavation of the area could not be done due to the vast number of electrical, cable, fiber-optic, telephone and water lines in the area. A specialized hydro-excavator was brought in, and the plumbing crew found the broken discharge pipe and fixed it. During this five-day project, the water in the office was cut off and staff worked from home. I apologize for any inconvenience you may have experienced during this maintenance, but I'm happy to report it is all fixed now.

This is a reminder that the second-half per capita is now due. If you owe your local lodge dues, please get current with your local lodge secretary. I am also pleased to advise you that we now have the capability to issue electronic membership cards. I am working on a plan to deploy them, most likely in the first-half per capita cycle of 2027. Of course we will still, for at least next year, issue the plastic cards. To participate in the electronic card opportunity, we must



Major sewer project at the National Office

have an active email address in your membership database profile. Now would be a good time to update your profile with your local lodge secretary.

In closing, please be safe as you protect your communities. It is a pleasure and honor to serve you as your National Secretary. If I or my staff can be of help to you, please let me know. **FOP**

House Concurrent Resolution 96



Whereas the brave men and women in law enforcement work tirelessly and relentlessly to safeguard the communities they are sworn to protect, serving as the backbone of public safety across our Nation;

Whereas law enforcement officers bear the critical responsibility of upholding the rule of law and maintaining the safety, stability, and public order upon which our communities depend;

Whereas law enforcement officers routinely and selflessly risk their own lives and safety to combat crime, remove dangerous and lethal drugs from our streets, and stand in defense of the most vulnerable among us;

Whereas law enforcement officers strengthen our communities through outreach, mentorship, crisis response, and countless daily acts of service that frequently go unrecognized;

Whereas, from resolving

neighborhood disputes to checking in on elderly residents and guiding youth programs, officers provide a quiet and steady presence that extends far beyond traditional law enforcement duties;

Whereas rhetoric and policies from leftist activists and progressive politicians seek to defund or dismantle local police departments undermine public safety and place both officers and the communities they serve at greater risk;

Whereas sanctuary city policies that restrict cooperation with Federal immigration authorities can compel local law enforcement agencies to divert already limited resources and actively encourage resentment toward local law enforcement;

Whereas the Trump administration's focus on restoring law and order has contributed to a notable decline in homicide rates, with levels reaching among the lowest recorded in over a century;

Whereas drug overdose deaths in the

United States have declined significantly, reaching their lowest levels since 2019;

Whereas violent crime rates have declined significantly in major cities across the United States; and

Whereas law enforcement officers deserve our deepest respect, unwavering support, and profound gratitude: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That Congress—

(1) appreciates and values the indispensable contributions that law enforcement provides to our communities and our country each and every day;

(2) recognizes the extraordinary sacrifice that law enforcement officers make to protect and serve their communities and their country; and

(3) expresses its profound and wholehearted support for the men and women of law enforcement.

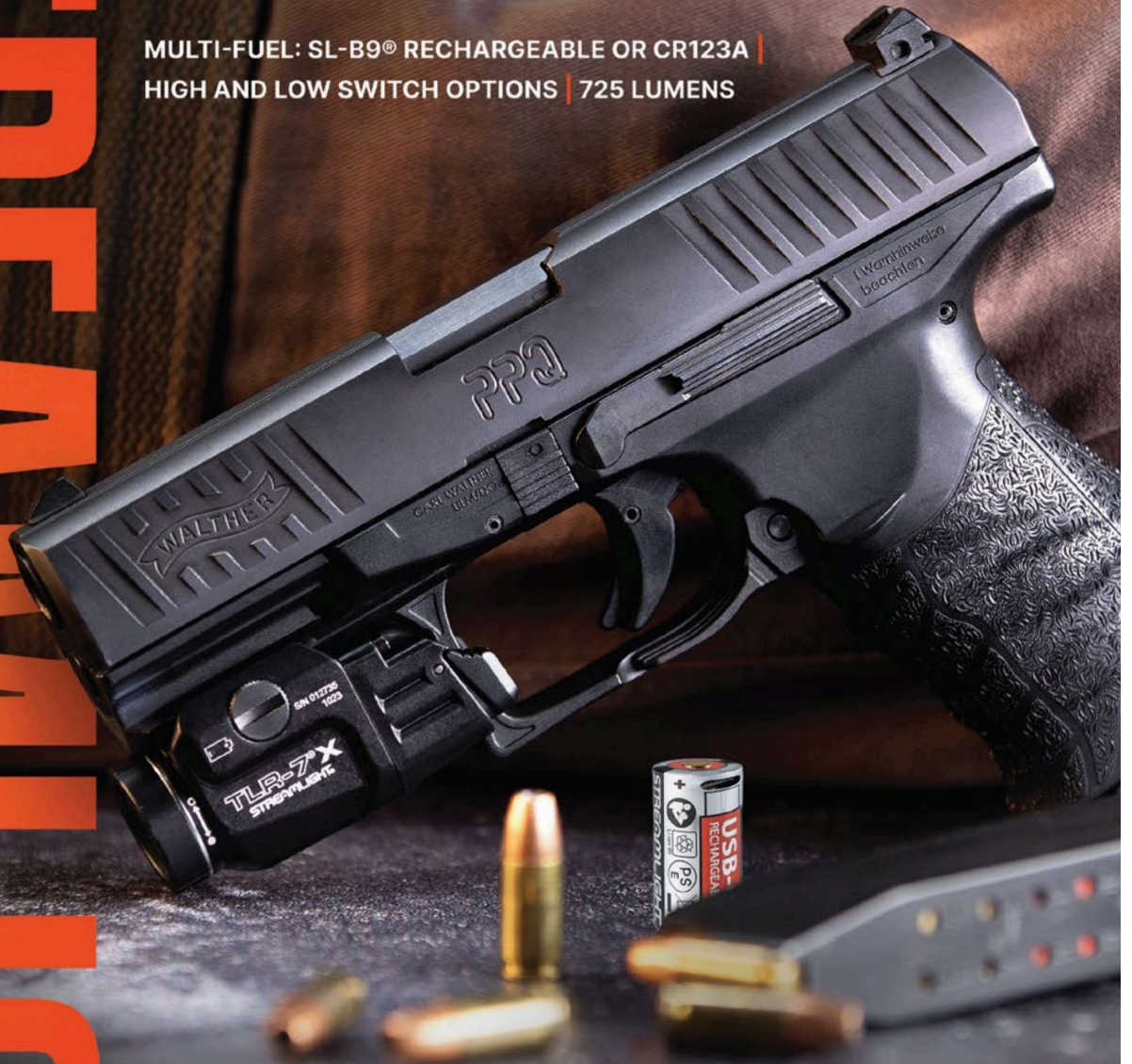
Passed the House of Representatives May 13, 2026. **FOP**

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CELEBRATING AMERICA'S 250th BIRTHDAY

The National FOP is proud to join our country in commemorating the 250th anniversary of the July 4, 1776, signing of the Declaration of Independence. This bold document laid the foundation for the formation of the United States, not only declaring the colonies' independence from Britain but stating the principles on which our government, and our identity as Americans, would be based: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

On the Fourth of July this year, communities across the nation will celebrate America's semiquincentennial by reflecting on our past, expressing love for our country and renewing our commitment to the ideals of democracy. America250 (america250.org), the national nonpartisan organization charged by Congress to engage every American in this historic moment, is planning "the largest synchronized Fourth of July celebration in U.S. history" with America's Block Party, an effort to unite communities nationwide on July 3 and 4 for live music, local celebration and a call to give back. Check the website to find or organize events in your area!

As part of this initiative, Americans are encouraged to participate in "Giving Fourth" through charitable donations



to their neighbors and communities. This type of generosity has always been part of the American tradition but is typically focused in December, leaving nonprofits under-resourced for much of the year. America250 is aiming to change that by establishing July 4 as a permanent fixture on the American giving calendar. (If you're looking for a worthy cause, the NFOP Foundation supports disaster relief, the National Peace Officers' Memorial Service, educational programs, critical incident programs, officer wellness, grants for lodges and members, and more — give at fop.net/donate.) The organization is also urging citizens to honor the

country's 250th by making 2026 a record-setting year for volunteering, and more than 8,651,000 volunteer service hours have been logged on its website so far.

The White House is also engaging all levels of government, the private sector, nonprofit and educational institutions, and every citizen across the country to celebrate this historic milestone through a public-private partnership called Freedom 250 (whitehouse.gov/freedom250). In addition to planned events culminating in the July 4 celebration and fireworks on the National Mall, individual federal agencies are marking the anniversary in a variety of ways. For example, citizens can celebrate by visiting National Parks Service sites dedicated to U.S. history (nps.gov/subjects/npscelebrates/usa-250.htm)

or checking out Smithsonian exhibits that tell the American story (si.edu/250/exhibitions).

In addition to these nationally organized tributes, law enforcement agencies around the country are honoring the occasion with special commemorative badges and patches, local festivities and more. Whether you spend America's 250th on duty, keeping your community safe, or off duty, enjoying the holiday with friends and family, we hope all of our members will take the opportunity to proudly and patriotically celebrate this momentous event in our great nation, and the rights and freedoms we are dedicated to upholding. **FOP**

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COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT:

SAFETY AND SECURITY

SAVANNAH NELSON / NATIONAL FOP

Every two years, thousands of law enforcement officers from around the world gather for the FOP's National Conference. It is one of the largest gatherings of officers in the country — leaders, members and high-profile public figures all in one place at one time. In today's environment, that kind of visibility carries risk.

Over the past decade, violence against law enforcement has continued to rise. Federal Bureau of Investigation data reflects an increase in ambush-style attacks, a reality officers already understand all too well. Large gatherings are no longer low-risk and safety can never be assumed.



That reality sparked action in 2013 during the National Conference in Cincinnati. At the time, the Conference brought together thousands of officers in a highly visible setting without a formal, coordinated security structure in place. The vulnerability was clear.

“Once Brother Stallings expressed concern about the safety of our members at National Conferences, I knew he was the right person to lead this effort moving forward,” former National President Chuck Canterbury said. “Prior to 2013, we relied on host lodges and the sergeant at arms to oversee security. Although well-intentioned, it was not adequate. We moved to improve our system by establishing a dedicated committee. I had known Carlton Stallings for many years and knew he brought extensive experience in planning and implementing safety protocols at major events. Once tasked with this responsibility, the committee took the assignment seriously, and I am proud of the work they do at every Conference.”

After the announcement, action quickly followed. Stallings was tasked with leading the effort and assembled a team, bringing in Jamy Steinberg, Mike Callahan and Don Teagarden.

“I served as a Georgia state trooper for 34 years, working to make communities safer,” said Stallings, a retired captain who also served as an assistant venue commander



during the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. “Now I have the honor and responsibility of helping make our Conferences safer for my brothers and sisters in the FOP.”

Over the next two Conferences, that initiative continued to grow and prove its value. At the Indianapolis Conference, National President Patrick Yoes formalized the effort by establishing the Conference Safety and Security Committee, expanding the team and making it a permanent part of the National Conference. The team was later joined by Dennis Peters and Eric Pew.

Continued on page 18 >



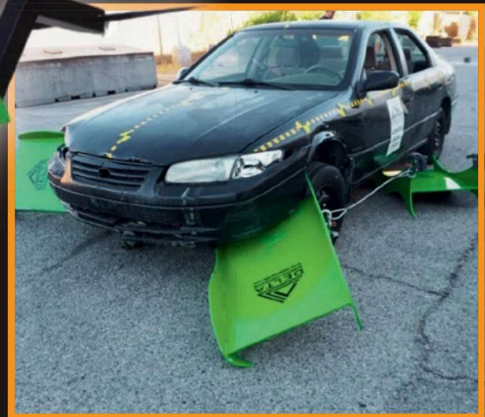


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COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT

Continued from page 16 >

Today, most attendees will never notice it.

The Conference feels seamless. People move freely, sessions stay on schedule and events unfold without disruption. That normalcy is the result of planning that begins weeks, often months, in advance. The committee works closely with host lodges and law enforcement partners at every level, treating each Conference as a unique environment with its own challenges. There is no single blueprint, only a shared responsibility to get it right.

“The safety of our National Conference is something we take very seriously, and I have complete confidence in the Safety and Security Committee that carries out that mission,” National Sergeant at Arms Steve James said. “The expertise they bring, combined with their deliberate, professional and often unseen work, ensures our members can come together safely and without disruption.”

The mindset is simple and familiar to anyone in law enforcement: Identify vulnerabilities; control what you can; prepare for what you cannot.

The risk is not always obvious. It is not what happens inside the room. It is what could happen around it. Unsecured access points, unattended items or a single bad actor in a crowded space can change everything in seconds. That is what the committee plans for, not out of fear, but out of responsibility.

Most of that work goes unseen. Attendees do not see the walkthroughs,



the coordination or the constant adjustments happening in real time. They are not supposed to. When it is done right, security is invisible.

But it matters.

“Safety at our National Conference is not left to chance; it is the result of disciplined planning, trusted leadership and a shared commitment to protecting those who protect others,” Yoes said. “When our members come together, they should be focused on the mission, not the risk. That confidence is made possible by the quiet, professional work of this committee.”

The National Conference is where decisions are made, relationships are built and the direction of the organization takes shape. The Safety and Security Committee exists to protect that space so every attendee can focus on why they are there.

Because when the job is done right, no one notices it at all. **FOP**



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IN SOLEMN REMEMBRANCE

45TH ANNUAL NATIONAL PEACE OFFICERS' MEMORIAL SERVICE

Thousands of law enforcement officers were joined by supporters and survivors for this year's National Police Week ceremonies in Washington, D.C., May 10–16. On May 15, a crowd gathered on the west front lawn of the Capitol for the 45th annual National Peace Officers' Memorial Service, sponsored by the National FOP and National FOP Auxiliary. The event remembered the bravery, dedication and service of federal, state, county, municipal, military, tribal and campus officers who gave their lives in the line of duty and the sacrifices of their loved ones left behind. "It is the greatest honor that I could possibly have as your vice

president to come here and say to these beautiful families, 'Thank you. And I'm sorry,'" said Vice President JD Vance, this year's keynote speaker.

"We're sorry for what you sacrificed, but we will never forget what your officer laid down," he added.

Additionally, National President Patrick Yoes and National Auxiliary President Glenda Lehman shared comments of gratitude and support.

Among the other dignitaries in attendance were Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche, Senator Eric S. Schmitt of Missouri, FBI Director Kash Patel and FBI Deputy Director Andrew Bailey. **FOP**



Photos by Jimmy Holderfield



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MEMORIAL SERVICE
Continued from page 21 >



NATIONAL PRESIDENT PATRICK YOES RECEIVES NLEOMF LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



During National Police Week in Washington, D.C., Fraternal Order of Police National President Patrick Yoes was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF) during the organization's annual reception held prior to the National Candlelight Vigil.

The award recognizes a lifetime of service and leadership in support of the law enforcement profession and the men and women who serve in it.

Accepting the honor before fellow law enforcement leaders, survivors and supporters, Yoes emphasized that the recognition reflected the collective service and sacrifice of the FOP and officers nationwide.

"While my name may be attached to this award, I accept it on behalf of the more than 382,000 members of the Fraternal Order of Police, and the countless law enforcement officers across this nation who quietly serve their communities with courage, integrity and compassion every single day," Yoes said.

Yoes also expressed appreciation to the NLEOMF Board, leadership, staff and supporters for their unwavering dedication to honoring fallen officers and supporting surviving families.

During his remarks, Yoes reflected on the deeper meaning of National Police Week, reminding attendees that the observances are rooted in remembrance rather than recognition.

"Especially during Police Week, we are reminded that this week is not about awards or recognition; it is about remembrance," he said. "It is about the officers whose names are etched in stone and the

families who carry that sacrifice forward every single day."

Yoes also acknowledged the support of his wife, Jennifer, thanking her for her "unwavering support, sacrifice and contributions to our shared mission of service."

The NLEOMF has long played a central role in preserving the memory of America's fallen officers through the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial and annual Candlelight Vigil, attended by thousands of law enforcement officers and surviving family members from across the country each year. **FOP**



National President Patrick Yoes, with his wife, Jennifer, and attendees at the NLEOMF National Candlelight Vigil



Establishing July as Law Enforcement Child Month

HONORING THE CHILDREN BEHIND THE BADGE

LEE SECHRIST / GRATITUDE INITIATIVE
CO-FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Every law enforcement officer understands service, sacrifice and commitment. Law enforcement is not simply a job, but a calling. For officers with families, it often becomes the family business, with spouses and children sharing in both the sacrifices and pride that come with the profession.

This July, the Fraternal Order of Police, the FOP Auxiliary and Gratitude Initiative will officially launch the first-ever Law Enforcement Child Month, a national movement dedicated to recognizing, celebrating and strengthening the children and families of America's law enforcement community.

This partnership reflects something every FOP member already knows — when police families are strong, officers are stronger, agencies are healthier and communities benefit.

Our Children Deserve Our Very Best

FOP families know all too well that their children grow up differently than most Americans. Law enforcement kids are built different. They are resilient, adaptable and proud to



stand behind Mom or Dad. Sometimes, however, a little extra recognition, encouragement and support can go a long way.

Law Enforcement Child Month is designed to recognize those children while also helping local lodges create meaningful opportunities to support police families in their own communities. The long-term vision is to build a nationwide annual movement that unites families, agencies, lodges, auxiliaries and communities in actively supporting and celebrating the children behind the badge.

Many law enforcement families are familiar with the Department of Defense's Month of the Military Child, established in 1986 to recognize the sacrifices and unique challenges faced by military children. Law Enforcement Child Month seeks to build a similar tradition for the children and families behind the badge — creating a signature annual event that celebrates, supports and

strengthens law enforcement families nationwide.

The goal is simple: celebrate local law enforcement children, strengthen their families and remind them they are seen, valued and supported.

A Partnership Focused on Action

Gratitude Initiative (GI) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2013 that has spent more than a decade helping military and veteran children succeed in college, career and life through its nationally recognized College Success Academy program.

Since beginning this partnership effort in August 2024, GI has worked with FOP national leadership, state leaders and the FOP Auxiliary to establish the framework for Law Enforcement Child Month and create tools that local lodges can use immediately.

Beginning July 1, GI will officially expand its proven College Success Academy program to serve the children of full-time law enforcement officers and retired FOP members nationwide.

Why Local Lodges Matter

The success of Law Enforcement Child Month depends on local involvement.

FOP lodges have always been strongest when members step forward to support one another close to home. Whether your lodge serves a large metropolitan department or a small rural agency, your local relationships matter.

This initiative gives lodges an opportunity to:

- Strengthen relationships with member families
- Recognize the sacrifices made by law enforcement children
- Support officer wellness through family engagement

To make participation simple for busy lodges and agencies, GI and FOP will provide a free online Law Enforcement Child Month Toolkit with ready-to-use resources for departments, lodges, auxiliaries and families. Resources will include proclamations, social media graphics, recognition certificates, event ideas and additional awareness materials designed to help communities celebrate local law enforcement children.

Don't Miss Important Updates

At the recent FOP State Presidents and Trustees Conference, leaders were briefed on preparations for Law Enforcement Child Month and asked to share information with local lodges.

A dedicated website has been launched to support the initiative at gratitudeinitiative.org/fop. The site serves as the central hub for updates, ideas, resources and opportunities connected to Law Enforcement Child Month.

Recognizing the demanding schedules of leaders and members, the FOP Law Enforcement Child Month Committee encourages all FOP and Auxiliary members to visit the website directly and complete the contact form. That will ensure you and your lodge receive important updates and resources leading up to July.

If you have ideas or want to make an impact locally, the website also provides a way to connect and share those ideas.

**When police families
are strong, officers
are stronger, agencies
are healthier and
communities benefit.**



A Mission Only the FOP Can Accomplish

With more than 2,200 state and local lodges and over 380,000 members nationwide, the Fraternal Order of Police is uniquely positioned to build a lasting national movement supporting law enforcement children and families. No other organization has the local relationships, trust and nationwide reach necessary to unite communities around the children behind the badge.

This initiative is also an opportunity to show local communities the human side of policing — the families, children and sacrifices that exist behind every uniform.

Every lodge has the ability to make a difference for local law enforcement children — whether through recognition, encouragement, connection or community support.

This July, together, we can help ensure law enforcement children across the country know they are appreciated, supported and never forgotten.

To learn more, receive updates, or get involved, visit gratitudeinitiative.org/fop.

Lee Sechrist is the co-founder and volunteer executive director of Gratitude Initiative. He is an Army Infantry combat veteran, proud dad of a 14-year law enforcement officer and grandfather of “cop kids.” **FOP**



THE WEIGHT OF SCRUTINY

Supporting Officers Through Politically Charged Investigations

SHERRI MARTIN / DIRECTOR OF WELLNESS

Police civilian review boards and politically influenced oversight systems have expanded significantly, driven by public demand for transparency, accountability and independent review of police conduct. High-profile incidents involving use of force, increased media coverage, widespread smartphone video recordings and public protests have accelerated calls for oversight mechanisms outside the traditional internal affairs process. Depending on the jurisdiction, these boards may review completed internal investigations, conduct independent investigations, recommend discipline, monitor department policies or issue public reports regarding officer conduct and organizational trends.

Civilian review boards were originally designed to provide independent evaluation of citizen complaints against police officers to strengthen public confidence in the investigative process. However, many oversight systems have evolved from advisory bodies into more influential entities with expanded authority. In some jurisdictions, review boards

now possess subpoena powers, employ independent investigative staff, directly impose disciplinary recommendations and have substantial influence over public narratives surrounding police incidents. Simultaneously, elected officials, advocacy organizations, media outlets and political activists increasingly shape public expectations regarding investigative outcomes before investigations are completed. This environment can create tension between legitimate accountability and perceived political pressure.

Investigations may become influenced by public opinion, media attention, election cycles or community activism rather than remaining strictly fact-driven and procedurally neutral. The rapid dissemination of information through social media has further intensified scrutiny. Video clips, incomplete facts and public commentary can shape public perception within hours of an incident, while formal investigations may take months to conclude. This often creates a situation in which officers are judged publicly long before investigative findings are issued.

Supporters of civilian oversight argue that

independent review improves transparency, increases legitimacy and strengthens community trust in law enforcement institutions. Critics, however, caution that some oversight systems risk becoming politicized, inconsistent or influenced by external pressures that may compromise due process protections and officer morale. One recent study found that, while civilian review boards may enhance perceptions of procedural fairness for some, particularly those with negative views of police, their involvement does not generally increase legitimacy. In fact, when these boards conflict with police chiefs, they may **diminish public trust** in both policing and civilian oversight and further entrench politically polarized attitudes toward policing.¹

As civilian oversight continues to expand nationwide, and as investigations have the propensity to become politically charged, police agencies, unions and civic leaders increasingly face the challenge of balancing important goals simultaneously: maintaining public accountability; ensuring fairness, impartiality and objectivity; and providing organizational support for officers under investigation.

It is this last responsibility that is often overlooked — support for the officer under investigation. For the officer involved, consequences begin long before findings are issued. Results of the biennial Critical Issues in Policing surveys, national surveys conducted by the National Fraternal Order of Police, consistently indicate year over year that organizational and operational stressors impact officers more than critical incident–related stress. This includes the weight of being under investigation.² Impacts on officers show up as increased anxiety, depressive symptoms and isolation. Fear of termination, prosecution and public humiliation impact confidence and decision-making, and result in burnout, compassion fatigue and moral injury. There is trauma in prolonged uncertainty, and when investigations are not objective and the officer under investigation perceives their fate as resting in the hands of a politically influenced entity, it can be devastating not only to the officer, but to their family and to the profession as a whole. Even when exonerated, officers may never fully recover professionally or emotionally.

In the 2025 Critical Issues in Policing Survey, respondents affirmed that the top reason they consider leaving the profession is intense scrutiny from those outside of the profession, which includes civilian review boards. Shifting standards, often based on media attention, lead to perceptions of unfairness and uncertainty. This perceived unfairness often creates more damage than the investigation itself. Lack of procedural consistency leaves officers under investigation feeling like outcomes are influenced by forces completely outside of their control — forces often uninformed about and ignorant of common police practice and procedure. Such scrutiny, often influenced by political forces, has caused hesitation in proactive policing among officers, arguably resulting in less safe communities. As the number of external review boards has increased nationwide, so too has the rate of burnout among police, with over half of officers surveyed between 2021 and 2025 consistently reporting medium to high levels of burnout. In many agencies, rates of retirement have skyrocketed and recruitment has suffered as officers are left feeling abandoned by institutions to which they have devoted their very lives.

As communities, it is important to remember that, while maintenance of public trust in law enforcement is key to effective policing, so too is the maintenance of the well-being of our greatest resource: our officers. And everyone has a role to play.

To the officer under investigation: Make every effort to mentally focus on things that are within your control. Maintain professional conduct, following legal and union guidance, and document every interaction throughout the process of investigation. Avoid social media engagement and resist the urge to listen to public narratives, focusing instead on facts. It is **imperative** to be intentional about prioritizing your mental health. Engage with trained peer support staff, avoid isolation from trusted friends and family, and, when needed, seek confidential, culturally competent professional counseling. Seeking support should be viewed as tactical resilience, not weakness. This may be one of the

REFERENCES

¹ Schiff, K.J., Schiff, D.S., Moy, B.J., McCrain, J., Mourtgos, S.M., & Adams, I.T. (2025). Does civilian oversight impact police legitimacy?, *PNAS Nexus*, 4 (9), pgaf267, doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgaf267.

² Martin, S.M. & Drew, J.M. Report of Biennial Critical Issues in Policing Survey. [fop.net/officer-wellness/survey](https://www.fop.net/officer-wellness/survey).



most challenging experiences of your life, but you will get through it. Maintain healthy routines like proper sleep, regular physical exercise, a nutritious diet and structured daily activity. Identify activities that allow you to feel a sense of accomplishment, even if small, and engage in them daily. Make a list and check things off!

To lodge and union leadership: Provide immediate support to officers under investigation. This means rapid access to legal representation, early wellness support — through both trained peer support and the availability of competent mental health services — and support for the officer’s family. Encourage normalization of the use of mental health support, acknowledging that the experience of being under investigation is among the most stressful experiences an officer can endure in their career. Maintain regular contact with the officer, providing updates and realistic expectations, and avoiding false optimism or unnecessary alarm. Push for procedural fairness and timely investigation and push back against politically motivated disciplinary processes. The longer an investigation drags on, the more impactful the uncertainty, potentially damaging the officer, their family, the agency and trust in the profession.

To police leaders: Immediately and publicly recognize the officer under investigation as a valuable resource deserving of an objective and fair investigation. In every case, avoid treating officers as liabilities rather than personnel, and resist allowing political considerations to override procedural fairness. Publicly distancing from an officer before all facts are known has been among the greatest failures of leadership observed in police administrators. Don’t be that person. A fair process strengthens public trust more than performative discipline imposed to meet political pressure. Integrity in the courage to stand up for fairness and officer well-being outweighs cowering to pressure to save an image. Ensure that your officer has access to competent wellness resources and that you encourage engagement with them. Supporting officer wellness does not conflict with accountability; it demonstrates humanity. Recognize the impacts of the investigation on the organization, morale and agency culture. Departments that safeguard fairness during investigations protect not only officers, but the integrity of policing itself.

To our citizens: Accountability and officer wellness are not mutually exclusive, and each are equally important. We can, and should, pursue fair, procedurally consistent and transparent investigations of police practice. This means calling out deficient officer performance, but also calling out improper investigations of police conduct. Reviews of police action should be conducted not by elected officials, influenced by the whims of those wishing to

SHARE YOUR STORY!

So many of us learn from the experiences of others, especially others with whom we share things in common. Do you have a story to tell of overcoming adversity in your own life? The National Officer Wellness Committee would like to hear it!

Whether you would just like to share your story privately with peers on the Committee or are willing to share with readers so that all can learn from it and celebrate with you, we want to hear from you! Contact us confidentially at officerwellness@fop.net.



THE WEIGHT OF SCRUTINY

Continued from page 27 >

maintain or acquire power, but by subject-matter experts in policing procedure, training and policy. At the same time, we should recognize that the men and women of law enforcement are performing a critical service, necessary to our safety and the security of our way of life, and that they do so often at their own peril. Our systems should not be adding to their sacrifice by piling on the added stress of a prolonged investigation of their attempts to do the very job we have asked them to do. National research from the Bureau of Justice Statistics has consistently shown that only a small percentage of citizen complaints against officers are ultimately sustained.³ However, even unsustained complaints can produce significant emotional, reputational and professional consequences for officers as the process itself may become punitive regardless of the outcome. We all have a duty to prevent this from happening. **FOP**

REFERENCE

³ Hickman, M.J. (2006). Citizen complaints about police use of force. Bureau of Justice Statistics. bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/citizen-complaints-about-police-use-of-force.

WELLNESS PROVIDERS

Chateau Recovery Midway, UT

chatearecovery.com/first-responders

FHE Health:

Shatterproof Program Deerfield Beach, FL

therehab.com/services/first-responders

First Responder Wellness **by Simple Recovery** Costa Mesa, CA

firstresponder-wellness.com

Harbor of Grace First Responder Program Havre de Grace, MD

harborofgracerecovery.com/first-responders

Throttle and Thrive Palos Verdes Estates, CA

throttleandthrive.com

Warrior's Heart Bandera, TX

warriorshheart.com

Find more vetted and approved wellness providers and programs at fop.net/officer-wellness/providers.



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STRONGER TOGETHER: ONE YEAR OF BACKING OFFICER HEALTH, READINESS AND RESILIENCE

A year ago, the National Fraternal Order of Police and the American Heart Association teamed up with one goal: protect the people who protect everyone else.

That work is already making a difference — reaching over 380,000 law enforcement officers across the country with practical tools, real information and a stronger focus on staying fit for the job and for life.

This effort is driven by leaders like Delaware FOP National Trustee Joe Wyka, chair of the National FOP Health and Welfare Trust Fund. For him, this mission isn't abstract — it's personal. It's about making sure officers have what they need to stay in the fight.

"This isn't just about awareness. It's about mission readiness," Wyka says. "The reality is, cardiovascular disease is still the number one threat to officer health — more than line-of-duty risks. We owe it to our officers to give them the tools to live longer, healthier lives, both on the job and at home."

One Year in — Real Progress

In just 12 months, this partnership has:

- Put a spotlight on cardiovascular risks, especially high blood pressure



- Delivered practical training and resources at key events, including the NFOP Expo (Miami Beach), Pathways to Excellence (Las Vegas) and National Board and State Presidents Meeting (Anaheim)
 - Started real conversations about officer health in departments nationwide
- This isn't theory — it's action. And it's gaining ground.

What Comes Next

We're not slowing down. The focus now is on:

- Training that fits the job — heart and brain health education built for the realities of law enforcement



National Walking Day, April 1, 2026
Las Vegas, Nevada

NFOP and American Heart Association

- Real voices — sharing stories from officers to drive awareness and break down stigma
- Long-term support — expanding access to mental health resources, stroke prevention and ongoing wellness tools

Bottom Line

Staying healthy isn't separate from the job — it is the job. Managing blood pressure. Watching the warning signs. Taking action early. That's how you stay ready — for your shift, your partner, your community and your family. Stay ready. Stay healthy. Stay strong. **FOP**

Check out the American Heart Association's **Life's Essential 8™** resources or scan the QR code to explore more tools that can help you track your health, set goals and stay strong — for the job and beyond.

The American Heart Association and the National Fraternal Order of Police are proud to collaborate to improve the cardiovascular health and overall well-being of law enforcement officers.



(800) AHA-USA-1 | heart.org

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD!

The FOP constantly endeavors to hear about the experiences of our members, so that we can understand how best to serve you.

The FOP was selected to partner with the Department of Justice to build standardized training in law enforcement peer support. Share your thoughts with us on how this training can best help our profession at surveymonkey.com/r/PowerInPeers.



Southeast Missouri State University



A New Model for Law Enforcement Education

For many law enforcement officers, pursuing a college degree can feel secondary to the demands of the job — long shifts, rotating schedules and the realities of serving their communities. Finding a program that fits around those responsibilities can be difficult, especially for officers returning to school years into their careers.

Southeast Missouri State University (SEMO), a comprehensive regional public institution in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, has a longstanding connection to criminal justice education and public safety training. Through its academic programs in criminal justice, the University has prepared individuals for careers in law enforcement and related fields for more than 50 years.

Now, through its partnership with the National Fraternal Order of Police University, SEMO is extending that commitment to officers nationwide.

Built for Working Officers

Nearly three out of four officers never finish a bachelor's degree. The reason isn't ability; it's a system that wasn't built for them. SEMO rebuilt it.

Dr. Brian Donavant, chair and professor of the Department of Criminal Justice, Social Work and Sociology at SEMO, spent decades working in law enforcement before transitioning into higher education. During his career, he served in patrol, investigations and police training leadership roles — experience that continues to shape the way he approaches criminal justice education today.



Dr. Brian Donavant, chair and professor, Department of Criminal Justice, Social Work and Sociology

Donavant said many of the program's design decisions came directly from challenges he witnessed while overseeing police training and working with officers trying to continue their education mid-career. His doctoral research at the University of Southern Mississippi focused on the effectiveness of online learning for law enforcement professionals, long before remote education became commonplace.

"A lot of officers don't doubt they can do the academic work," Donavant said. "The bigger challenge is figuring out how to fit school into everything else they already carry — their schedules, their families and the demands of the job."

Courses are offered fully online in accelerated eight-week formats, allowing students to focus on one or two classes at a time while continuing to work full time. FOP members and their families also receive a 10% tuition discount, the same tuition rate regardless of residency, and opportunities to earn credit for prior learning, including law enforcement academy training and professional experience.

"Most officers are not looking for the traditional college experience," Donavant said. "They're looking for a program that respects the experience they already have and gives them a realistic way to finish a degree."

A Different Path to a Criminal Justice Degree

That focus on flexibility and practicality also influenced SEMO's newest criminal justice offering: Missouri's first 90-credit-hour Bachelor of Science in criminal justice.

Unlike a traditional 120-credit-hour bachelor's degree, the program was designed to reduce the total time and cost required for completion while increasing the amount of criminal justice-focused coursework students take along the way.

Donavant said the structure came from conversations with officers who wanted a degree pathway that felt more directly connected to their careers.

"Nobody wants to spend years taking classes that feel disconnected from what they do every day," he said. "We wanted

Continued on page 34 >

The National Fraternal Order of Police University

The National Fraternal Order of Police University (NFOPU) has successfully paved the way for hundreds of FOP members to pursue higher or continued education. For more information on the NFOPU Consortium, go to FOP.net/fop-university.



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Ashland, OH



Orange Beach, AL



Romeoville, IL



San Diego, CA



Cape Girardeau, MO



Manchester, NH



Tiffin, OH



Cincinnati, OH



Arlington, VA



Adelphi, MD



San Diego, CA



Williamsburg, KY



Fayette, IA



Minneapolis, MN



Wichita, KS

FOP.net/fop-university

NFOPU SPOTLIGHT

Continued from page 33 >

to build something more focused, more practical and more adaptable.”

The shorter pathway also gives officers who paused their education years ago a more realistic opportunity to return and finish a degree.

For many students, that flexibility matters as much as the coursework itself.

“Sometimes the hardest step is simply deciding to come back,” Donavant said. “Once students realize the program was built with their reality in mind, finishing a degree can start to feel possible again.”

Making Education More Accessible

While SEMO is rooted in Missouri, its partnership with FOP expands access to officers across the country. With online delivery and the same tuition rate regardless of residency, officers can enroll and complete degrees without relocating or stepping away from their roles.

“Partnering with the Fraternal Order of Police allows us to reach officers across the country who are looking for a program that fits their reality,” Donavant said. “This is about access and making sure officers have an option



that is flexible, affordable and directly connected to their profession.”

The partnership is designed around a straightforward idea: officers should be able to continue their education without putting their careers or personal lives on hold.

“Most officers already know how to lead, problem-solve and serve their communities,” Donavant said.

“Education should build on those strengths, not create another obstacle.”

About SEMO

Southeast Missouri State University is a regional public university in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, offering online and in-person degree programs in criminal justice and related fields. Learn more at semo.edu. **FOP**

There Is ALWAYS Another Option

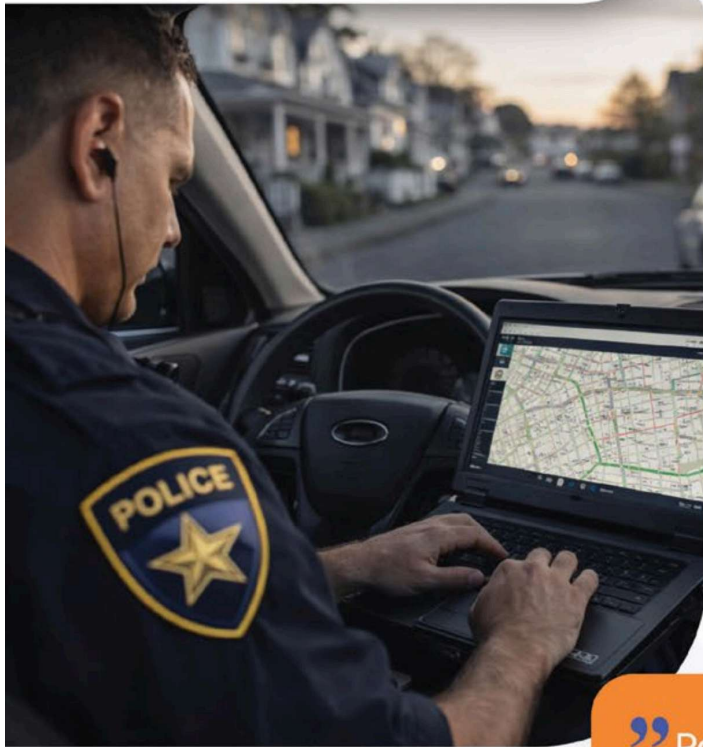
FOP Vetted and Approved Crisis Hotlines



Cross Text Size is 36, 34/7, and confidential



FOP.net/officer-wellness/crisis-hotlines



The Smarter Way to Manage Patrol Coverage

Patrolfinder gives law enforcement agencies real-time visibility into patrol activity, helping chiefs and command staff better understand coverage, identify gaps, improve officer coordination, and strengthen community confidence. With actionable patrol data and a clear operational picture, departments can make smarter decisions without adding unnecessary complexity to the job.

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Congress Focuses on DHS Reconciliation Bill



Congress Finally Passes Partial FY26 Funding for DHS; Awaiting Final Reconciliation Bill

Federal funding for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) lapsed on February 14 over highly partisan policy disagreements with respect to oversight accountability and enforcement funding for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP). Key components and agencies of DHS were left without operation funds, forcing the administration to resort to extraordinary measures to ensure that DHS employees were paid while the partial shutdown lasted.

Fruitless negotiations and failed procedural votes continued through March and April, prompting the National FOP to issue the statement ([FOP.net/2026/04/fop-to-congress-do-your-job](https://www.fop.net/2026/04/fop-to-congress-do-your-job)), “Protecting our nation’s homeland doesn’t stop, and neither should DHS’ officers’ paychecks.” The statement urged Congress to act and endorsed S. Con. Res. 33, which was passed by the Senate at the end of April and began the budget reconciliation process to bypass the partisan gridlock.

On April 30, the House passed the final DHS funding measure — an updated version of H.R. 7147 — by voice vote, which President Trump signed into law the same day. The new law provides approximately \$64.4 billion in total discretionary funding for DHS and fully funds core components, including the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Transportation Security Administration (TSA), U.S. Coast Guard and other non-enforcement components.

Just the Facts:

» After months of a partial government shutdown, the House passed the final U.S. Department of Homeland Security funding measure in late April, which was signed into law the same day. It provides approximately \$64.4 billion in total discretionary funding for DHS and fully funds core components, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Transportation Security Administration (TSA). The reconciliation bill, the next step in the budgeting process, is advancing through House and Senate committees. Meanwhile, the House Appropriations Committee recently considered and favorably reported several FOP-supported bills, including designating more than \$762 million for the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), with \$262 million allocated for its hiring program.

Despite the enactment of the DHS spending bill, we cannot afford to forget that the department was partially shut down for 76 days, which is something we can never allow to happen again. An op-ed written by National President Patrick Yoes delivered a stark message: Congress must stop playing politics with our safety ([tinyurl.com/Yoes-op-ed](https://www.tinyurl.com/Yoes-op-ed)).

At this writing, the reconciliation bill is advancing through House and Senate committees with floor consideration and possible enactment later this month.

Legislative Update: FY2027 Appropriations Process Begins in the House

The House Committee on Appropriations recently considered and favorably reported H.R. 8845, the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2027 on a 32–28 vote. The bill, as reported, provides \$2.769 billion for the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) and more than \$762 million for

the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), with \$262 million allocated for its hiring program. Further analysis will be available soon.

Importantly, the House Appropriations Committee once again directs the Justice Department to maintain the COPS Office as a “distinct organizational grantmaking” entity, which should prevent COPS from being absorbed by OJP as proposed in the administration’s budget.

The Senate has not yet begun its appropriations process for the Justice Department.

Legislative Update: Protect and Serve Act

The National FOP sent a letter to 20 representatives, all of whom are former co-sponsors of the Protect and Serve Act, asking that they once again support law enforcement and the FOP by cosponsoring H.R. 1551 ([tinyurl.com/Protect-and-Serve-Act-letter](https://www.tinyurl.com/Protect-and-Serve-Act-letter)).

We are urging all members to

review this list of representatives and reach out with a letter, phone call or email urging them to support this FOP priority.

In the Senate, the FOP is working with a small bipartisan group of senators to discuss potential changes to the bill as introduced that may allow it to move forward.

Legislative Update: COPS Reauthorization

Representatives Joshua K. Harder (D-Calif.) and John H. Rutherford (R-Fla.) introduced H.R. 8750, the COPS Reauthorization Act, which will establish and reauthorize the COPS Office and all the programs it administers through 2031.

The focus of our national crime-fighting strategy is community-oriented policing, and the COPS Office has served as the keystone of this strategy for more than 30 years. At a time when the law enforcement profession is struggling to hire and retain quality law enforcement

officers to keep our communities safe, the COPS Hiring Program (CHP) is absolutely vital.

The FOP is working with our allies in the Senate to introduce a companion bill very soon.

Legislative Update: Senate Judiciary Committee Marks Up Bills for National Police Week

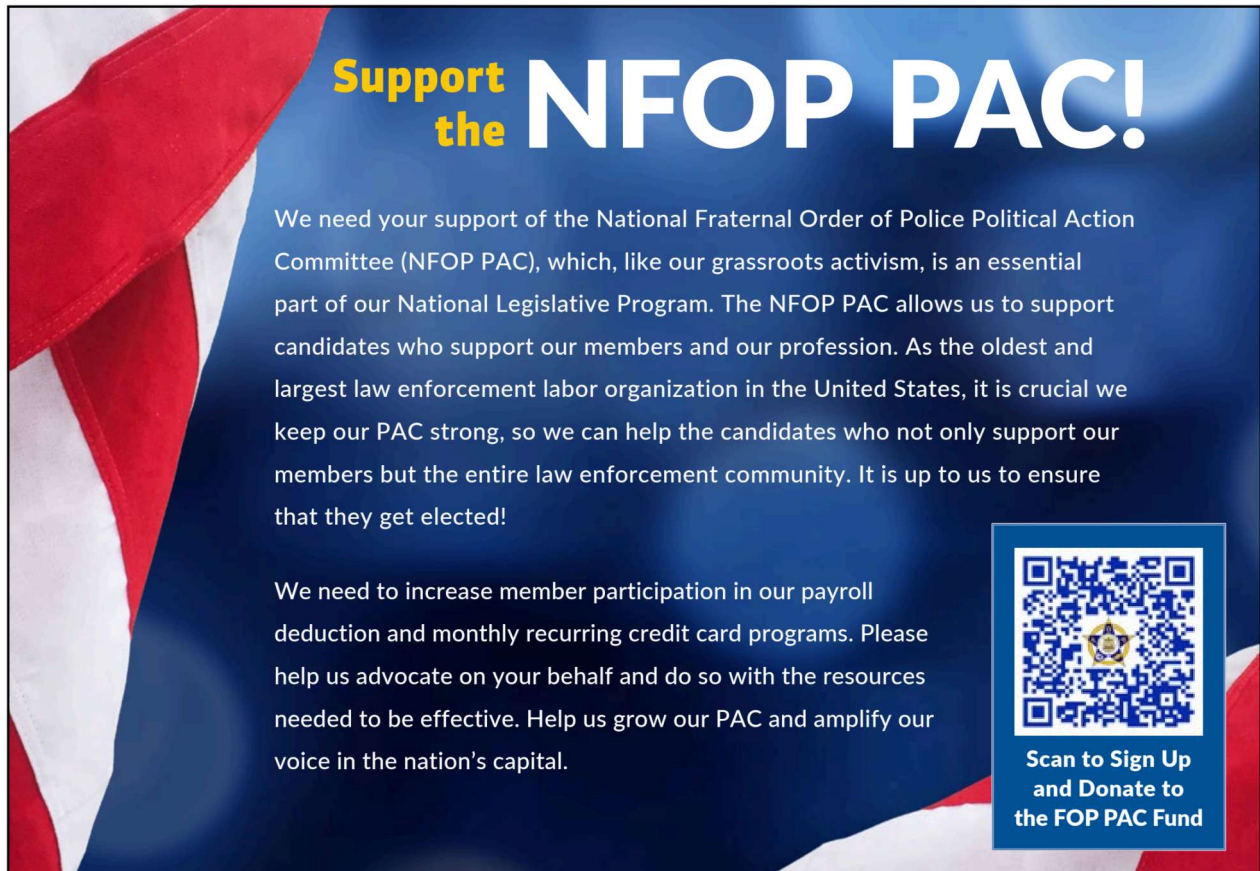
The Senate Committee on the Judiciary considered and favorably reported the following bills that were supported by the FOP:

- **S. 736**, the Lieutenant Osvaldo Albarati Stopping Prison Contraband Act, which would make the introduction of a cellphone into a prison a felony offense
- **S. 825**, the Fighting Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Act, which would direct the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to develop a state-of-the-art treatment program for public safety officers experiencing acute

stress disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or similar conditions

- **S. 1890**, the Carla Walker Act, which would authorize a grant program that would provide certain eligible recipients, like law enforcement agencies and medical examiners, funds to facilitate forensic genetic genealogy (FGG) DNA analysis in furtherance of criminal investigations
- **S. 3897**, the Officer John Barnes and Chief Michael Ansbro Public Safety Officers' Benefit Program Expansion Act, which aims to improve the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) program to ensure that the men and women who serve our communities — and their families — receive timely and meaningful support when tragedy strikes


Continued on page 38 >



Support the NFOP PAC!

We need your support of the National Fraternal Order of Police Political Action Committee (NFOP PAC), which, like our grassroots activism, is an essential part of our National Legislative Program. The NFOP PAC allows us to support candidates who support our members and our profession. As the oldest and largest law enforcement labor organization in the United States, it is crucial we keep our PAC strong, so we can help the candidates who not only support our members but the entire law enforcement community. It is up to us to ensure that they get elected!

We need to increase member participation in our payroll deduction and monthly recurring credit card programs. Please help us advocate on your behalf and do so with the resources needed to be effective. Help us grow our PAC and amplify our voice in the nation's capital.



Scan to Sign Up and Donate to the FOP PAC Fund

Top Priorities in Brief



H.R. 3226, the Law Enforcement Officers Equity Act

House: 64 co-sponsors (18 R, 46 D)

Senate: Not yet introduced

H.R. 1505/S. 636, the Public Safety Employer–Employee Cooperation Act

House: 62 co-sponsors (10 R, 52 D)

Senate: 1 co-sponsor (1 D)

H.R. 2243/S. 679, the LEOSA Reform Act

House: Passed

Senate: 12 co-sponsors (12 R)

H.R. 1551/S. 167, the Protect and Serve Act

House: 112 co-sponsors (90 R, 22 D)

Senate: 25 co-sponsors (25 R)

H.R. 2094/S. 978, the Homes for Every Local Protector, Educator, and Responder (HELPER) Act

House: 127 co-sponsors (50 R, 77 D)

Senate: 24 co-sponsors (8 R, 16 D)

To see a full list of legislation supported by the FOP in the previous Congress, please visit tinyurl.com/ycy5k5rv. Members should continue to monitor the FOP's social media platforms and our website for the latest legislative news.



WASHINGTON REPORT

Continued from page 37 >

The committee also favorably reported two other bills: S. 3041, the Tribal Warrant Fairness Act, and S. 4394, the Promoting Police Leadership Act.

Other Legislative Activity

The FOP has supported the following legislation since the last issue of the *Journal*:

- **H.R. 7184/S. 4446**, the Preventing Rogue Equipment for Synthetic Substances (PRESS) Act, which would provide federal prosecutors and law enforcement agencies with the authority to hold foreign entities accountable for intentionally importing pill presses and precursor chemicals for illicit drug manufacturing
- **H.R. 8746/S. 4500**, the Violent Incident Clearance and Technological Investigative Methods (VICTIM) Act, which would establish a grant program administered by the U.S. DOJ to help state and local law enforcement agencies improve their clearance rates for homicides and firearm-related violent crimes
- **H.R. 8750**, the COPS Reauthorization Act, which would establish and reauthorize the COPS Office and all the programs it administers through 2031

Sign Up for the FOP's Weekly Update

The FOP's *Weekly Update* from Capitol Hill is distributed every week, providing our members with the latest news from Washington, D.C. If you're not getting it, go to tinyurl.com/FOP-weekly-update to sign up.

Also, make sure you are a regular visitor to all our social media platforms, as these frequent posts are the best way to keep up with the National FOP's daily activity. Follow the National FOP on:

- Facebook (@GLFOP)
- X (@GLFOP)
- Instagram (@FOPnational)
- Truth Social (@FOPNational)

Do your part! Please **share, comment and like** our content.

NFOP PAC Update

The PAC passed a milestone last month, reaching a total of over \$100,000! While this is a good first step, it does not really compare with the much, much greater amounts raised by other law enforcement and public safety groups. We have a long way to go!

With the next election cycle just months away, we have time to replenish our PAC funds, but we need to start today. We need more of our members to contribute to ensure that our PAC has the resources to support candidates who will fight for our officers and the issues that are important to them.

This summer, we are asking all FOP members to find a way to contribute to the National FOP PAC. Our profession depends on having well-informed lawmakers who listen to and understand the challenges facing law enforcement today.

We are urging members (and lodges) to sign up for recurring, monthly contributions using their credit card. This is the most effective and reliable way to contribute and to strengthen our PAC.

These contributions need not be for large amounts (though these are also very much appreciated) — but every dollar helps! If every FOP member gave just \$1, we could raise \$382,000! If 10% of our members gave just \$5 this year, we would raise more than \$191,100.

To donate online, please go to nfop-pac.firstresponderprocessing.com. If you would like to donate via check, please make it out to the National Fraternal Order of Police Political Action Committee and mail it to 328 Massachusetts Ave. NE, Washington, D.C. 20002. For inquiries about our effortless payroll deduction program or to sign up for recurring monthly donations, please contact the Steve Young Law Enforcement Legislative Advocacy Center at (202) 547-8189 or David Taboh at dtaboh@fop.net.

Thank you to all of you who have supported and continue to support our PAC with regular contributions. **FOP**



Top 10 Concerns of Police Unions Today



These concerns are not listed in any particular order; the order can differ with each jurisdiction or agency. They can interconnect in most cases, and issues can feed each other. Low staffing increases fatigue, which increases injuries, which increases workers' comp costs, which increases attrition, which worsens staffing. Weakening bargaining rights undermines the ability to fix staffing, training and safety issues. Public perception pressures influence policy mandates, which often lack funding, which again affects staffing and safety.

This is why some unions today are framing their advocacy around operational readiness, community safety and workforce stability, not politics.

1. Recruitment and retention:

Shrinking applicant pools and accelerated attrition, difficulty competing with private sector wages and benefits, and loss of experienced officers leading to operational gaps

2. Staffing levels and workload:

Mandatory overtime becoming the norm; burnout, fatigue and increased injury rates; and reduced proactive policing due to reactive staffing models

3. Officer safety and assaults on officers:

Rising rates of assaults and ambush-style attacks; need for updated equipment, training and staffing to reduce risk; and mental health impacts from repeated exposure to trauma

4. Collective bargaining rights and due process:

Legislative efforts to restrict bargaining topics or weaken contracts; ensuring fair investigations,

representation and consistent discipline; and protecting grievance procedures and arbitration rights

5. Training, standards and professional development:

Need for modernized, realistic, scenario-based training; funding gaps for deescalation, defensive tactics and technology; and career progression pathways to retain midcareer officers

6. Compensation, benefits and retirement security:

Wage compression between new hires and senior officers, erosion of pension systems or attempts to shift to defined-contribution plans, and rising healthcare costs for active and retired members

7. Mental health, wellness and PTSD support:

Increased PTSD, depression and cumulative trauma; need for confidential, stigma-free access to mental health services; and support for peer programs and early intervention wellness models

8. Technology, equipment and policy mandates:

Body-worn camera mandates without funding; outdated vehicles, radios and protective gear; and technology policies written without operational input

9. Public perception and political pressure:

Officers feeling unsupported or vilified, rapid policy changes driven by political cycles rather than data, and difficulty maintaining morale and professionalism under scrutiny

10. Legal liability and personal risk exposure:

Increased civil



litigation risk for individual officers, confusion around qualified immunity debates, and need for legal defense coverage and union-provided representation. **FOP**



Scan the QR code
for more information
about NFOP Labor
Services.



Retired But Still Covered: Understanding CCC

For most law enforcement officers, retirement is the end of a career — not the end of responsibility. Many retired officers continue to carry under the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act (LEOSA), whether for personal protection, travel or simply peace of mind.

But what happens if that decision to carry leads to a legal challenge?

That is where concealed carry coverage (CCC) through the FOP Legal Defense Plan becomes critical.

Why Retirees Still Need Protection

Retirement does not eliminate risk. In fact, in some ways, it increases exposure. A retired officer involved in a concealed-carry incident no longer has an employer standing behind them. There is no department legal team, no city attorney, no automatic defense.

Even when a retired officer acts lawfully and in self-defense, they may still face:

- Criminal investigation or prosecution
- Civil litigation
- Significant attorney fees before any resolution

The cost of defending against a single criminal charge can reach six or seven figures. The Plan has paid more than \$200 million in legal fees over its history, including multimillion-dollar criminal defenses for Plan members.

For a retiree, those costs would come directly out of personal savings without coverage.

What CCC Covers

The Legal Defense Plan includes claims for legal defense costs arising in connection with the authorized carrying of a weapon pursuant to LEOSA.

For retired members enrolled in CCC:

- Coverage applies to civil and criminal claims associated with the lawful carrying and/or use of a concealed weapon.
- Participants may choose their own attorney.
- When using a Plan attorney, reasonable and necessary legal defense costs are fully paid, subject to Plan terms.

This is not reimbursement after the fact. It is structured legal defense support designed specifically for FOP members.

Real-World Scenarios

While every claim is different, the situations retired officers face often fall into predictable categories.

- **A defensive shooting while traveling:** A retired officer lawfully carrying under LEOSA intervenes during an armed robbery at a gas station. Although the individual is cleared criminally, they are still named in a wrongful death civil lawsuit. Defense costs begin immediately.
- **A brandishing allegation:** A retired officer draws a concealed firearm during a confrontation in a parking lot. No shots are fired, but a bystander files a complaint. The officer must respond to a criminal investigation.
- **A use-of-force question after an assault:** A retiree uses their concealed firearm in self-defense during a home invasion. Even with clear video evidence, prosecutors review the case and a grand jury proceeding follows.

In each of these situations, the issue is not guilt. It is defense. Legal representation must begin immediately, and it must be strong.

CCC exists to make sure retired members do not face those moments alone.

An Affordable Safeguard

For retired law enforcement FOP members certified to carry under LEOSA or applicable state law, CCC provides civil and criminal defense coverage at a fixed annual cost.

Compared to the potential cost of retaining private counsel for a serious criminal matter, the value is clear. A single retainer for a high-level defense attorney can exceed the cost of coverage many times over.

Retirement should protect your time — not put your financial future at risk.

Continued Protection

The FOP Legal Defense Plan was created to defend those who serve and protect. That mission does not stop at retirement.

Retired members remain part of the Fraternal Order of Police family. CCC ensures they remain protected while exercising their right to lawfully carry.

Take the Next Step

If you are a retired FOP member certified to carry under LEOSA or state law, enroll in concealed carry coverage today at foplegal.com/retirees.

If you are a lodge leader, consider hosting an educational session for retirees in your area. Contact us at info@foplegal.com or call (800) 341-6038 to schedule a presentation and ensure your retired members understand their options and the protection available to them. **FOP**

FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE



800-341-6038
foplegal.com

Concealed Carry Coverage for Retired Law Enforcement

Stay protected in retirement.

As a retired law enforcement officer, you've earned the right to carry - and the peace of mind that comes with knowing you are protected.

The FOP Legal Defense Plan's Concealed Carry Coverage provides unlimited legal defense for civil and criminal claims associated with the legal carrying and use of a concealed weapon by a retired law enforcement officer authorized to carry concealed.

For just \$75/year, you receive:

- Unlimited legal defense with a plan attorney
- Coverage for criminal and civil charges if you are legally carrying concealed as a retired Law Enforcement Officer, according to LEOSA or state laws



Iowa's Brady-Giglio Reform Survives Constitutional Challenge



On May 1, the Iowa Supreme Court issued a significant decision for law enforcement agencies, prosecutors and attorneys representing police officers. In *Richmond v. Jefferson County Attorney*, the court upheld the constitutionality of Iowa Code § 80F.1(25), Iowa's judicial review mechanism for *Brady-Giglio* list placements, and affirmed the removal of a county sheriff from a prosecutor's *Brady-Giglio* list.

The decision represents one of the most important appellate rulings to date addressing the growing national tension between prosecutors' *Brady* obligations and officers' due process and employment interests. At the same time, the Iowa Legislature has moved to further strengthen protections for officers through recently passed law, which expands the rights available to officers challenging *Brady-Giglio* placements and creates a mandatory attorney fee-shifting provision for prevailing officers. Together, the Iowa Supreme Court's decision and the Legislature's latest amendments demonstrate a clear policy direction: *Brady-Giglio* systems can coexist with procedural protections for officers.

In the realm of criminal prosecutions, few legal doctrines have had as profound an impact on law enforcement officers as *Brady v. Maryland* and *Giglio v. United States*. These landmark cases established the constitutional obligation for prosecutors to disclose material exculpatory evidence under *Brady* and impeachment evidence, including credibility issues involving government witnesses, under *Giglio*.

For police officers, *Giglio* disclosures have carried increasingly significant professional consequences. Across the country, officers identified as having credibility concerns have faced termination, placement on prosecutorial

Just the Facts:

» In *Richmond v. Jefferson County Attorney*, the Iowa Supreme Court concluded the state's judicial review mechanism for *Brady-Giglio* list placements met the standards of constitutionality. This is one of the most important rulings to date in addressing the growing national tension between prosecutors' *Brady* obligations and officers' due process and employment interests. What's more, the Iowa Legislature recently passed a law that expands officers' rights to challenge their placement on *Brady-Giglio* lists. The Iowa framework shows a middle ground can be struck: Prosecutors retain full authority over criminal prosecutions and disclosure decisions, while officers gain notice, reconsideration procedures, judicial review, confidentiality protections and, now, attorney fee recovery.

"do not call" lists, restrictions on courtroom testimony and, in many cases, the effective end of their law enforcement careers. These outcomes may arise from sustained findings of dishonesty, but they may also stem from allegations or incidents that were never formally adjudicated or subjected to meaningful review.

In an effort to avoid potential due process violations in criminal prosecutions, many prosecutors' offices maintain internal *Brady-Giglio* lists identifying officers whose credibility could potentially become impeachment material in future cases. Prosecutors often err on the side of inclusion, particularly given the constitutional stakes associated with failing to disclose impeachment evidence. Once an officer is placed on such a list, however, the practical consequences can be severe. Departments frequently determine that an officer who cannot reliably testify in court can no longer effectively perform essential law enforcement duties.

Historically, officers in many jurisdictions have had little or no meaningful recourse to challenge their inclusion on *Brady-Giglio* lists. Compounding the issue is the absence of any uniform national standard governing

when an officer should be designated as a *Giglio* witness. Prosecutors' offices often apply differing standards, procedures and evidentiary thresholds, leading to inconsistent outcomes and concerns regarding fairness, transparency and due process. As a result, officers in similar circumstances may face dramatically different consequences depending on the policies and practices of the particular prosecuting authority involved.

Recognizing these concerns, Iowa enacted reforms that created procedural protections for officers facing *Brady-Giglio* placement, including notice requirements, reconsideration procedures and eventually judicial review.

The *Richmond* case arose after the Jefferson County attorney placed Sheriff Bart Richmond on a *Brady-Giglio* list following disputes surrounding an investigation into a deputy's use of force during a DUI arrest. According to the opinion, the county attorney believed Richmond failed to cooperate fully with the investigation and questioned Richmond's "judgment, credibility, candor and truthfulness." After Richmond sought reconsideration unsuccessfully, he petitioned the district court for review

under Iowa Code § 80F.1(25). The district court conducted an in-camera review and ultimately ordered Richmond removed from the *Brady-Giglio* list, finding that while Richmond's conduct may have lacked forthrightness, it did not amount to actual deceit or dishonesty. The county attorney appealed, not challenging the specific factual determination, but instead attacking the constitutionality of the statute itself. The appeal raised three principal constitutional arguments:

1. The statute interfered with prosecutors' *Brady* obligations and therefore violated criminal defendants' due process rights.
2. The statute violated separation-of-powers principles by improperly limiting prosecutorial discretion.
3. The statute was void for vagueness.

The Iowa Supreme Court rejected all three arguments.

The prosecutor argued that judicial removal of an officer from a *Brady-Giglio* list could interfere with a prosecutor's constitutional obligation to disclose impeachment material to criminal defendants. The court disagreed, emphasizing a critical distinction: Iowa's statute regulates only the maintenance of *Brady-Giglio* lists, not prosecutors' disclosure obligations in individual criminal cases. The court specifically noted that prosecutors remain entirely free to disclose impeachment or exculpatory information regardless of whether an officer appears on a formal *Brady-Giglio* list. The constitutional disclosure obligation exists independently of any list itself.

This portion of the opinion may prove especially important nationally because many critics of *Brady-Giglio* reform statutes argue that officer-review procedures inherently intrude on prosecutors' constitutional duties. The Iowa Supreme Court squarely rejected that premise.

The prosecutor next argued that judicial review of *Brady-Giglio* placements improperly intruded on executive branch authority and prosecutorial discretion. Again, the court disagreed. While acknowledging that charging decisions, witness selection and prosecution strategy are core executive functions, the court emphasized that the statute does not dictate how prosecutors handle any individual criminal case.

Importantly, the court explained that judges reviewing *Brady-Giglio* placements

cannot force prosecutors to call officers as witnesses or prevent prosecutors from disclosing impeachment information when constitutionally required. The statute merely allows judicial oversight regarding whether an officer may remain on a formal *Brady-Giglio* list. The court characterized the statute as a permissible legislative regulation governing interactions between executive branch actors — prosecutors and law enforcement officers — rather than an unconstitutional encroachment on prosecutorial power.

Finally, the prosecutor asserted that the statutory framework was vague and internally inconsistent. The Iowa Supreme Court declined to reach the merits because the issue had not been properly preserved at the trial court level.

At nearly the same time the Richmond decision was issued, the Iowa Legislature passed House File 2797, further expanding protections available to officers challenging *Brady-Giglio* placements. The legislation contains two particularly noteworthy provisions that strengthens the remedies available to affected officers.

First, it expressly provides that officers placed on *Brady-Giglio* lists, "regardless of when such placement, action or decision occurred," are entitled to the statute's protections. The bill also applies retroactively to placements and proceedings occurring on or after July 1, 2021. Second, and perhaps most significantly, the legislation creates mandatory fee-shifting. If an officer prevails in challenging a *Brady-Giglio* placement, the district court "shall award" equitable relief, attorney fees, expenses and court costs. Those costs are paid by the governmental entity responsible for the prosecuting agency.

That provision substantially changes the litigation landscape. Officers previously faced significant financial barriers when challenging *Brady-Giglio* placements. Mandatory fee awards now create a meaningful incentive for officers to pursue review while also encouraging prosecuting agencies to carefully evaluate placements before litigation.

Iowa may serve as a blueprint for other jurisdictions attempting to balance prosecutors' disclosure obligations with procedural fairness for officers. For years, many officers have argued that *Brady-Giglio* placements often operate with minimal procedural safeguards despite carrying potentially career-ending



consequences. Prosecutors, on the other hand, have maintained that broad discretion is necessary to comply with constitutional disclosure obligations. The resulting tension has prompted debates nationwide regarding how to protect both defendants' constitutional rights and officers' due process interests.

The Iowa framework attempts to strike a middle ground. Prosecutors retain full authority over criminal prosecutions and disclosure decisions, while officers gain notice, reconsideration procedures, judicial review, confidentiality protections and now attorney fee recovery. After *Richmond*, Iowa now has one of the clearest appellate endorsements in the country for the proposition that *Brady-Giglio* review statutes can survive constitutional scrutiny while still preserving prosecutors' *Brady* obligations. As additional states continue evaluating *Brady-Giglio* reform measures, the Iowa model will likely serve as a closely watched example of how legislatures and courts may balance prosecutorial discretion with meaningful procedural protections for law enforcement officers. **FOP**

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Courage Under Fire

“The strongest people aren’t fearless — they simply move forward while fear rides shotgun.”

Jacksonville Guns N Hoses is an annual boxing event in Jacksonville, Florida, hosted by the Jacksonville Fraternal Order of Police Foundation. Since its inception in 1999, Guns N Hoses has raised over \$1.7 million for local charities and has recognized acts of heroism throughout the history of the event.

In 2018, we recognized Sergeant Jeff Heinrich of the Coral Springs Police Department for his actions on February 14, 2018, when a mass shooting occurred at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland. The attack was carried out by 19-year-old former student Nikolas Cruz, who arrived on campus shortly before dismissal time. Armed with a legally semiautomatic rifle and multiple magazines of ammunition, Cruz entered the school’s freshman building and opened fire on students and staff.

At the time of the attack, Heinrich was off duty and watering the baseball field at the high school, where his son played baseball and his wife was a teacher. Hearing the shots ring out, Heinrich rushed into the school unarmed to assist the injured.

The shooting lasted several minutes and caused widespread panic throughout the campus. Teachers attempted to shield students in classrooms, while others barricaded doors or helped students escape through windows and hallways. Law enforcement officers and emergency responders arrived quickly, securing the area and evacuating survivors. Cruz fled the scene by blending in with students leaving the school, but he was arrested later that afternoon in a nearby neighborhood without incident.

Seventeen people were killed in the attack, including 14 students and three



Coral Springs Police Sergeant Jeff Heinrich

staff members. Another 17 individuals were injured. One of those shot was student Kyle Lagman, who was carried to safety by Heinrich. The tragedy became one of the deadliest school shootings in U.S. history and renewed national debates over gun laws, school security and mental health services.

The shooting prompted policy changes in Florida, including legislation that raised the minimum age to purchase firearms and expanded certain school safety programs.

In 2022, Cruz pleaded guilty to multiple counts of murder and attempted murder. A jury later sentenced him to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

When I contacted Heinrich about being our guest for the event, I asked him if we could help any of the students who were victims of the shooting. Heinrich immediately told me that a student named Maddy Wilford, who was shot four times (and barely survived), could use a service animal. I contacted a local trainer, Marcus McCullough, and asked him what he would charge us for a canine. McCullough donated the \$9,000 canine, and his wife traveled to South Florida at no charge to bond the canine with Maddy.



Heinrich being honored at the 2018 Jacksonville Guns N Hoses charity boxing match



Maddy Wilford graduating from Utah State University, accompanied by her service dog, Anya

On May 2, 2026, Maddy, with service dog Anya by her side, graduated from Utah State University and plans to attend medical school. The heroism of Sergeant Heinrich and the incredible generosity of Marcus McCullough helped make Maddy’s graduation possible.

Heinrich is a member of Coral Springs FOP Lodge #87.

The National FOP History Committee members are David L. Stevens (chair, Fla.), James Flores (N.M.), Dewey Stokes (Ohio), Bruce Evaritt (Md.), Ben Roberts (Texas) and Adolph South (Ala.). **FOP**



BENEFITS OF FOP MEMBERSHIP

The National Fraternal Order of Police is the world's largest organization of sworn law enforcement officers, with over 373,000 members in more than 2,200 lodges. We are committed to improving the working conditions of officers and the safety of those we serve through education, legislation, information, community involvement and employee representation. Here's a quick overview of the wide variety of services and benefits that the FOP offers to its members.

Legislative Office

The office on Capitol Hill lobbies on issues important to rank-and-file law enforcement officers. The National Legislative Program is the most active and comprehensive of any law enforcement organization in Washington.

Legal Defense Plan

This self-funded plan is available to eligible FOP groups and individual members to cover law enforcement exposures, including administrative, civil and criminal legal coverage; H.R. 218 coverage; and the Moonlighting Liability Insurance Program.

Labor Services Division

Comprehensive resources and services designed to ensure that no officer goes to the bargaining table alone. Labor Services stands ready to provide the people and resources you need for contract information, experienced legal experts, training seminars, personalized labor research and more.

National Peace Officers' Memorial Service

This solemn event is held every year during National Police Week to honor those who have given their lives in the line of duty. Open to the public, it brings together the expanded law enforcement family and national leaders, pays tribute to the fallen and offers words of comfort to their surviving family members.

FOP Journal

Published digitally 12 times a year, the *FOP Journal* is the official publication of the National FOP. Each issue contains reports from the Executive Board, updates on law enforcement legal and labor issues and so much more!

Disaster Relief

As part of the NFOP Foundation, the Fraternal Order of Police Disaster Relief Fund (a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization) relies on the generosity of individuals, organizations and corporations and is always prepared to assist our members in distress.

Charity Partnerships

- **Easter Seals:** Helping children and adults with disabilities live better lives is at the heart of Easter Seals' mission, and the FOP, as a long-standing Easter Seals National Corporate Partner, has helped raise more than \$15 million. Donate online at www.easterseals.com and be sure to indicate your FOP affiliation when donating!
- **Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics:** The FOP is committed to helping people with intellectual disabilities learn to become self-reliant and contributing members of our communities.

Service Providers

The National FOP list of Service Providers currently includes Liberty Mutual insurance, Avis and Enterprise car rentals and a variety of licensed products from HALO, the official FOP merchandiser.

Education Services

The Education Services Committee develops and implements professional law enforcement training programs and events to equip members with the skills needed to enhance their careers, and has established a training schedule covering a wide spectrum of leadership, labor and legal issues. The National FOP also provides scholarships to eligible applicants.

National Fraternal Order of Police University (NFOPU)

Recognizing that four-year and graduate degrees are increasingly important for law enforcement career advancement, the FOP collaborates with a select consortium of universities willing to offer members the education they need with a flexible schedule and reasonable cost. **FOP**



For more information on all of these programs, visit www.fop.net.

Out of the Fire ... and Into the Next Chapter



A few years back, I opened my first article in this role with the line “Out of the frying pan and into the fire.” At the time, it felt about right. I had just stepped into a brand-new position — one that didn’t come with a road map — and was given the opportunity to build something from the ground up.

I remember thinking, “What will this become? What should it become?”

Well, now we know.

The Division of Education and Outreach has grown into something meaningful — not because of any one person, but because of the collective effort behind it. We built on strong foundations already in place — Leadership Matters, the Wellness Summit, Labor training — and expanded into new areas through partnerships, outreach and a willingness to explore where the FOP could add value.

Through CRI-TAC, we extended our reach to agencies across the country. Through new initiatives, we opened doors to conversations around leadership development, wellness and the future of the profession. And with the launch of Pathways to Excellence, we brought it all together, creating a national training experience that reflects the very best of what the FOP has to offer.

Looking back, I’m proud of what we built. But more importantly, I’m confident in where it’s headed.

With that said, the time has come for me to step away from my role as director of Education and Outreach.

To be clear, I am not stepping away from the Fraternal Order of Police. I remain committed to the organization and will continue to support key initiatives moving forward. Like many transitions in this profession, this one is about timing and about positioning the program for continued growth.

And that brings me to what comes next. I am pleased to introduce Chet Effler,

who will be stepping in to help lead Education and Outreach into its next chapter. Chet currently serves as president of the North Carolina State Lodge and brings a deep and well-rounded background in law enforcement. His career includes extensive investigative and leadership experience at the state level, where he rose to division chief with responsibility for statewide operations. In addition to his operational background, Chet has remained closely connected to the training side of the profession, with experience supporting law enforcement agencies across North Carolina within the state’s criminal justice training and standards framework. Within the FOP, he has served in multiple leadership roles over the years, reflecting both his longstanding commitment to the organization and the trust placed in him by the membership.

I’ve had the opportunity to work alongside Chet, and I can tell you he brings the right combination of experience, perspective and approach. He respects what’s been built, but more importantly, he’s ready to build on it. He understands that the true

measure of any program is its relevance in the field and its impact on those doing the job.

Chet and I will be working side by side throughout the month of June to ensure a smooth and deliberate transition. I will officially step away from my role as director of Education and Outreach effective July 1.

The truth is that this was never about a position; it was about a purpose. Education and Outreach does not belong to one person. It belongs to the FOP. It belongs to the members who show up, engage and take what they learn back to their agencies and communities. That’s what makes it work.

As I transition out of this role, I do so with a great deal of gratitude — for the leadership, for my colleagues and for all of you who supported this effort along the way. The relationships we’ve built and the work we’ve done together will continue to carry forward.

And if the last few years have shown us anything, it’s this: There’s still plenty of work to be done and plenty of opportunity ahead.

As always, God bless you and God bless the FOP. **FOP**

FOP DIVISION OF EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

And don’t forget about the Collaborative Reform Initiative – Technical Assistance Center (CRI-TAC) for no-cost training and consultation delivered by the field, for the field, from subject-matter experts from across the country. For more information, visit cops.usdoj.gov/cri-tac.





The FOP Store

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Back Image



The challenge coin commemorates the 250th anniversary of signing the Declaration of Independence.

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